

St Mary's and St John's CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103119
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	286563
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	434
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs H Graham
Headteacher	Mrs D Oelman
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Prothero Gardens Hendon NW4 3SL
Telephone number	020 8202 0026
Fax number	020 8203 5584

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and serves a socially and economically mixed area with some pockets of deprivation. A much higher than average proportion of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and almost half of these have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly above average. The percentage of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is below the national average but has been rising recently. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is also higher than average. The school was formed by the amalgamation of St. Mary's CE Junior School and St. John's CE Infant School in September 2005. The Nursery opened in April 2007. The school has the 'Active Mark'.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Mary's and St John's is a good school with some outstanding features. This is encapsulated by one parent who wrote, 'St Mary's and St John's has been great, my son has done very well and loves going to school, I cannot fault anything.' Most parents share this view. Children behave well both in and out of lessons, enjoy school and help towards its smooth day-to-day running. The importance of making healthy eating choices and taking regular exercise is well understood and the school is currently working towards gaining 'Healthy School Status'. Pupils contribute well to the community in a number of ways and the school council are effective and responsible.

Although the Nursery has only recently opened, children are welcomed into a super environment which provides a bright and lively start to their education. Throughout the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 they achieve very well. This excellent progress continues between Years 3 and 6 because of the outstanding teaching pupils receive and a curriculum which completely meets their needs. This leads to significantly above average standards overall. However, the school has identified that achievement in English does quite match the excellence in mathematics and science and is rightly focused on developing the pupils' writing skills further.

Teachers devote their time to planning interesting lessons for their classes. Pupils are clear about the purpose of lessons and clearly know whether they have achieved success. A particular strength is the way teachers set challenging tasks which enable pupils to solve problems independently, particularly in mathematics and science. This results in a very high percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels in these subjects. Teachers use new technology with ease and pupils respond very positively to this resulting in a keen desire to learn more. Oral feedback given to pupils during lessons is excellent and really helps them to know what steps to take to improve their work in order to achieve their targets.

The outstanding work of the headteacher and her senior team has ensured that a seamless transition took place when the infant and junior schools were amalgamated in 2005. They quickly got to grips with the creation of a successful primary school. Equally, the new Nursery is already making a real difference to children's learning. The monitoring of the quality of teaching by senior leaders is sharply focused on the impact on pupils' progress and they keep a keen eye on standards and achievement. Middle managers provide clear direction for others and provide action plans in order to raise standards. However, the school has recognised the need to increase the influence of middle leaders on teaching and learning within their areas of responsibility. Governors involve themselves well in the life of the school and support it well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in English so as to match that attained in mathematics and science.
- Ensure that middle managers each have a clear oversight of standards and the quality of teaching in their areas across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children begin school with below average skills and, by the time they begin Year 1, most have reached, and over half have exceeded, the goals expected of them. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Considering the low starting points of many pupils, this represents excellent progress. This progress continues throughout Years 3 to 6 and pupils reach significantly above average standards in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. More able pupils perform particularly well at the higher levels in these subjects. Achievement in English is good and the school is working hard to reach the excellence in this subject too. The measure used for pupils' progress in 2006 was in the top four per cent of schools nationally overall and pupils are on course to meet their challenging targets in the forthcoming national tests in all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well and those with English as an additional language achieve better than their national counterparts. No groups underachieve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils is good because of the good quality care, guidance and support they receive. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school. The strong emphasis on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and their high levels of basic skills means they are well prepared for the next step in their education. From an early age, children fit happily in to the routines and expectations of school life. Parents say that their children enjoy school and this view is supported by their good behaviour and enthusiasm to learn. Pupils are very positive about the joining of the infant and junior schools. They say they feel closer to each other and mix more across the age range. Pupils work hard and are pleased with their achievements, for example winning house points for their school team. Attendance is satisfactory; pupils are punctual throughout the day and keen to take part in the range of extra-curricular opportunities available. Pupils feel safe and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They feel their views matter and that they can make a difference in the school. For example, the school council is currently planning a fruit stall for older pupils. Pupils readily take on responsibility, both in the classroom and the playground, and make a good contribution to the wider community. They have raised money for a variety of charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding which, coupled with a creative curriculum results in excellent achievement. Teachers consistently emphasise the importance of solving problems and provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills. This helps raise the standards pupils reach by the time they leave the school. They often work together in small groups or pairs, which helps develop their speaking and listening skills. This has a positive impact on the progress made by all pupils but particularly those with English as an additional language. Learning is enhanced by the good teamwork between teachers and support staff and the effective use of time. Shared learning objectives, individual targets and excellent verbal feedback enable pupils to know what they need to do to improve. Lessons are carefully prepared and planning takes into account the range of needs of all the pupils, providing challenging and interesting activities. The good planning involved is summed up by one parent who said, 'At first I thought we were lucky that my son hit a run of good teachers, but now it is apparent to me that it has nothing to do with luck.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It provides excellent continuity of learning across the school. There are developing links between different subjects which allow pupils to use literacy, numeracy and computer skills in different and meaningful contexts. Children in the Foundation Stage are developing a wide range of skills across a range of linked activities. For instance, they enjoyed writing letters to 'Teddy' as part of their project on the Teddy Bear theme. Specialist teaching of physical education is of high quality and the school offers an impressive range of physical activities. As a result, it has been awarded the 'Active Mark' and pupils excel in local and national competitions. Pupils won silver medals in the Barnet 'Tag Rugby' Tournament. There is a strong emphasis on the development of basic skills and support strategies for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those acquiring English. This impacts extremely well on progress. The personal, social, health and emotional emphasis also contributes very well to pupils' overall development and staff report an increase in confidence, self-esteem and their ability to resolve conflict. The curriculum is enriched by an extensive range of visits and visitors and extra-curricular activities. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 have the opportunity to attend residential trips and take part in interesting clubs such as 'Origami' and country dancing. Themed weeks such as 'arts week' give pupils opportunities to learn in depth and participate in enjoyable and exciting activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. The school's supportive Christian ethos provides a caring environment in which pupils from all backgrounds flourish and have the opportunity to achieve their best. Pupils have individual targets which help them to take some responsibility for their learning and contributes to their good personal development. Books are marked regularly and inform pupils whether they have achieved their learning objectives and what to do to improve their work. Procedures to safeguard children are in place and reviewed annually. The health and safety of pupils is a priority and risk assessments are carried out regularly. Pupils are informed about their future options and given a good level of support to help them prepare for their move to secondary school. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those with English as an additional language are quickly identified and appropriate support put in place. The school works well with parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. As one said, 'I feel my children are well cared for and taught at the school. I am happy with their progress and the targets set for them.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good with some exemplary features. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Her clarity and vision and strong sense of direction steer the school successfully towards continuous improvement. One of the governors reported, 'The school never stands still, it leads from the front'. The joining of the infant and junior school has been very successful due to the headteacher's skilfully planned approach, enthusiasm and determination. The senior leadership team successfully share their expertise to ensure good consistency in teaching and progression in learning. They analyse school information to identify

and target extra support for any underachieving pupils. As a result, new programmes are set up to raise achievement, as seen in both reception classes. All pupils are provided with equal opportunities to achieve well and the school ensures that they do.

The senior leadership team and the headteacher are using evidence from observations of teaching and learning to share good practice. The middle management team are not yet in a position to evaluate standards or to effectively monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects with accuracy. This limits opportunities for them to measure the impact of their actions. However, they are able to provide some examples of impact through informal monitoring.

The school has an accurate understanding of how well it is doing and what it needs to do even better. The school improvement plan provides clear guidance on relevant issues for raising standards. In light of this, the school's capacity to make further improvements is good. The governing body makes a good contribution and their meetings and committee structures are effective in supporting school improvement. New governors are supported well by more experienced governors.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's and St John's CE Primary School, Hendon, NW4 3SL

Thank you for making our recent inspection of your school so welcoming. How polite and helpful you were when we talked to you and asked questions. You were full of enthusiasm about your school and said how much you enjoyed attending. We were very impressed by how well you do in competitions in your borough, silver medals for 'Tag Rugby' and two very successful football teams! Excellent achievements! You also have the opportunity to attend lots of clubs where you can learn new skills. You have a school council which effectively helps to improve things in your school.

We think your school is a good school which is outstanding in some areas. Your headteacher and her senior leadership team do an excellent job and really care that you all achieve as well as you possibly can. Your teachers plan interesting lessons very carefully for you and really help you to learn well and solve problems for yourself. We think they do an excellent job too. The new Nursery is a bright and inviting place and is already doing a good job for the very youngest of you.

Even in a good school like yours there are some things which could be even better. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that her managers keep a closer eye on their own subjects and also to ensure that you all do as well in English as you do in mathematics and science.

Once again, thank you for making our visit a pleasant one.

Kind regards

Glynis Bradley-Peat
Lead Inspector